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Letter dated 11 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the visit of the joint humanitarian assessment mission comprising representatives of the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations system in the Sudan, namely, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, to the Golo area in Jebel Marra, Central Darfur State, which was conducted from 8 to 13 December 2016 (see annex).

The visit, together with others by foreign envoys, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations country team, is testimony to the improvement in the access to Jebel Marra and in the security and humanitarian situation there. It also sheds light on the fact that, as mentioned in the report, "access is difficult owing to the poor condition of the road and the rocky, mountainous terrain". This needs to be urgently addressed by development partners. The assessment mission was briefed on the efforts of the Government to provide security, education, health, water and sanitation services to the citizens in Golo.

It is hoped that the international community will support the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report, given that doing so will bolster the ever-improving situation on the ground and advance the peace process.

It will be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Omer Dahab Fadl **Mohamed**
Permanent Representative

17-00624 (E) 230117

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Annex to the letter dated 11 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Report of the joint inter-agency-Government of the Sudan humanitarian assessment mission

Summary

A joint inter-agency-Government of the Sudan humanitarian assessment mission was conducted in Golo, in central Jebel Marra, from 8 to 13 December 2016. It was requested by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator as a follow-up to a previous scoping mission to Golo led by the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator in August 2016. Government participants came from Khartoum and Zalingei, while participants from humanitarian organizations came from El Geneina, Nertiti and Zalingei. The mission was led by Badr El Din Abdullah Mohamed Khair of the Humanitarian Aid Commission and co-led by Felix Omunu of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The mission covered the following sectors: food security and livelihoods; water, sanitation and hygiene; health; education; non-food items; and return, reintegration and recovery. Its assessment methodology included interviews with key informants, focus group discussions, observation and a review of secondary sources of information.

According to the local authorities, more than 80 per cent of the estimated 148,000 people displaced from central Jebel Marra have returned to their areas of origin. According to government sources, however, some 10,000 internally displaced persons in Golo are yet to return to their original homes in the surrounding villages. The mission was not able to verify those figures.

The Government provided assistance to the affected population in Golo during their displacement and after their return. To address urgent humanitarian needs, including food, non-food items, health, water and sanitation, the Government implemented a six-month response plan. As a follow-up, the mission was tasked with assessing the situation and providing recommendations to address any gaps.

The mission highlighted some gaps in the different sectors covered in the assessment. With regard to food security and livelihoods, the returnees missed the planting season because they were displaced. Therefore, urgent assistance is needed to address the food insecurity concerns of the population, including those who are expected to return soon. With regard to water, sanitation and hygiene, the Government has rehabilitated existing water sources and installed new ones, thereby increasing access to safe water. Regarding health, the situation is under control, with no epidemic or major disease outbreaks reported. The hospital has received considerable support in terms of medical cadres, equipment and drugs. However, more assistance in terms of drugs and equipment is needed to ensure the smooth running of the hospital, which is the only health facility available in central Jebel Marra. With respect to education, basic and secondary schools are functioning;

however, large average class sizes and inadequate education materials were highlighted as the main challenges.

Although the mission's main focus was to assess and address the humanitarian needs of the population, it is crucial to link humanitarian assistance to recovery and development. By doing so, intervention policies that deal with recovery and development concerns could be adopted while taking into account the urgent needs of the affected communities.

In the light of the above, the mission made specific recommendations to address the challenges identified in the relevant sectors:

Short term (one to six months)

- Address the urgent needs of the population, especially through the provision of food, non-food items and medical support to the recently returned population to sustain their families at least until the coming agricultural season

Medium term (one to two years)

- Focus on recovery interventions, while also addressing the residual humanitarian needs identified
- Undertake an in-depth needs assessment in central Jebel Marra covering villages outside Golo to comprehensively determine the needs of communities

Education

- Build new basic and secondary schools and hold more classes in existing ones
- Provide learning materials and increase the number of teachers

Health

- Rehabilitate and equip the hospital to improve its capacity to function effectively
- Provide equipment
- Train employees and recruit new, well-trained cadres

Water, sanitation and hygiene

- Building at least three large solar-powered water pumps and 10 hand pumps in remote areas to facilitate access to water

Food security and livelihoods

- Support agricultural production through the provision of seeds and tools and the marketing of agricultural produce
- Improve the physical access to central Jebel Marra through the rehabilitation of the Golo-Nertiti road and reactivating flights to Golo operated by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service

Long term (two to five years)

- Support the community's primary agricultural activities by providing services to improve production, building dams for water harvest and storage, improving planting and harvesting techniques for farmers and packing and marketing
- Construct a paved road to link Golo to El Fasher and Zalingei
- Strengthen the human resources capacity in key government departments to support recovery and development interventions

I. Introduction

1. Golo is the capital of central Jebel Marra in Central Darfur State. Since the Government launched an operation in the Jebel Marra region in January 2016, a number of people were reportedly displaced from Golo and the surrounding villages to various areas, among them South Darfur, North Darfur and other places of Central Darfur states, including Guldo, Nertiti, Thur and Zalingei. However, according to the commissioner of central Jebel Marra, the majority of the displaced people have since returned to their homes in Golo and surrounding villages, while others continue to return on a daily basis.

2. In May 2016, the Government of the Sudan launched a six-month plan to stabilize the situation in Jebel Marra and support recovery efforts in the area. The plan was aimed at improving the security situation and restoring basic services. The implementation of the plan is currently ongoing.

3. In August 2016, the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator led a joint United Nations-Government scoping mission to Golo. One of its recommendations was to conduct a technical assessment across all sectors to inform the response to humanitarian and recovery needs there. The assessment mission was the result of a request by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Sudan to address the recommendation made by the scoping mission. The purpose of the mission was to conduct a technical sector assessment to identify the current needs of communities and make appropriate recommendations. As part of the mission, an inter-agency team of humanitarian personnel from El Geneina, Nertiti and Zalingei, together with government officials from line ministries in Khartoum visited Golo from 8 to 13 December to conduct a technical assessment of humanitarian and recovery needs in the area (see attached list of participants). The team was later joined by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the Commissioner General of the Humanitarian Aid Commission, who flew to Golo on a half-day mission.

II. Security and access

4. At the time of the assessment mission, the security situation in Golo was stable. According to the local authorities, that was attributed to the Government's commitment to bringing peace and stability to the entire Jebel Marra region. The team members were encouraged to drive and move freely without armed escorts. They visited the town centre, including the market area, and observed people moving and transacting business normally.

5. Physical access is difficult owing to the poor condition of the road and the rocky, mountainous terrain. Many impediments delayed the movement of the mission, including the frequent breakdown of the armoured personnel carriers of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, tyre punctures, constricted and narrow passages and overheating of the vehicles after running at an extremely reduced speed for a long time. As a result, the team had to stay overnight in Guldo.

6. During the rainy season, the numerous wadis that cross the road make it nearly impossible to access Golo. Communities, local leaders and the government of central Jebel Marra said that road conditions were a key constraint to the development of Golo.

7. Golo can also be accessed by air. There are two helipads there, which can be used for helicopter transport. The helipads had been used by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service for several years before flights were suspended. As part of the mission, the Air Services made its first flight to Golo in several years in order to bring in the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the Commissioner General of the Humanitarian Aid Commission. It takes only some 45 minutes to travel from El Fasher to Golo by helicopter.

III. Population movement

8. According to the Commissioner of central Jebel Marra, the population of central Jebel Marra was approximately 148,000 prior to the displacement that happened in 2016, with the population of Golo alone estimated at 60,000. During the conflict, a majority of the people were displaced from their homes to other parts of Central Darfur including Golo, Guldo, Nertiti, Thur and Zalingei. Some people were displaced to North Darfur and South Darfur States. At the time of the mission, the authorities estimated that more than 80 per cent of the displaced people had returned to their homes in Golo and surrounding villages. The Humanitarian Aid Commission mentioned that an estimated 10,000 displaced persons remained displaced in Golo.

IV. Findings and recommendations

A. Food security and livelihoods

9. The assessment mission held focus group discussions with two groups of local residents (25 women and 20 men). The residents reported that, although the rainfall in the current season was better compared with the previous one, crop production was less compared with 2015. That reduction was attributed to the smaller size of cropland cultivated compared with the previous year, owing to the long time that people spent in displacement and to the impact of crop pests on production.

10. The residents mentioned that they had access to the market in Golo, the only one functional in the entire central Jebel Marra. Nevertheless, the residents mentioned that there was an inadequate supply of food available, especially cereals. Although the main source of food are the markets in Guldo and Nertiti, the poor condition of the road makes it difficult to move supplies, including food, to Golo. As a result, food prices are reportedly very high and beyond the reach of ordinary residents. For example, a 90 kg bag of millet is sold for 500 Sudanese pounds. A number of households mentioned that they could not afford to buy food from the market.

11. The World Food Programme (WFP) organized a one-month emergency general food distribution in October 2016, covering 25,564 internally displaced persons and returnees in Golo. The food was to last for only two weeks. The residents also

mentioned that the Government had distributed food to some returnees (numbers unknown) in May 2016. The amount of food distributed was clearly not able to cover all their needs. To cope with the food shortage, families borrow from friends and relatives, reduce the number of meals consumed in a day or use forest products, while others allow children to eat first.

12. Some people managed some limited cultivation. The main crops include millet, sorghum, orange, apple, okra, tomatoes, garlic, onions, beans and ground nuts, while beekeeping is also pursued.

Recommendations

- Undertake general food distribution to new returnees and internally displaced persons in Golo
- Provide agricultural inputs, including seeds and tools, to boost crop production
- Strengthen extension services to communities
- Improve the Nertiti-Golo road to encourage marketing, such as transporting produce to markets outside Golo and shipping supplies to Golo. Some of the sections of the road could be rehabilitated by local communities through a food-for-work initiative
- Build the capacity of farmers' organizations and associations to allow them to access microfinance
- Provide food processing projects for women's groups (food for assets)
- Implement early recovery programmes, including food for assets, food for education and farmer to market

B. Water, sanitation and hygiene

1. Water supply

13. According to the Commissioner of central Jebel Marra, a large portion of the population there lives in Golo. There are 14 hand pumps, 1 mini water yard and 12 open dug wells. The government water, environment and sanitation department has kept the hand pumps functional, improved the existing mini water yard, installed a solar-powered water pump and upgraded a hand pump to a mini water yard, powered by that solar-powered water pump. Two motorized water systems in Golo now serve nearly 7,000 people. Although water coverage is, in general, good, some areas are still underserved. Households in such areas drink water from unprotected sources.

14. There are no water supply sources in four of the five basic schools and secondary schools in Golo. They use mainly water that is transported by donkey carts. According to the water, environment and sanitation department, outside Golo there are efforts aimed at extending the provision of safe water to 56 of the 85 villages in central Jebel Marra. The mission, however, did not visit the villages outside Golo.

Recommendations

- Drill and install a new motorized system in the southern part of Golo
- Drill an additional six hand pumps to cover underserved neighbourhoods
- Provide and install an elevated tank at the mini water yard in Golo
- Provide continuous monitoring of water quality and a water quality laboratory in the long term
- Provide water to all schools, preferably through the connection and installation of storage tanks
- Improve drainage control and sanitation at the hand pumps
- Reactivate and train water committees and ensure the proper management of all water sources
- Improve the monitoring and reporting system to respond to maintenance demands in a timely manner

2. Sanitation and hygiene

15. In general, no open defecation was observed in Golo. The latrine coverage is estimated to be 70 per cent according to the water, environment and sanitation department. However, no comprehensive assessment was conducted to determine the exact gap in coverage. The schools do not have adequate latrine coverage, while the latrines that are available are all below standard, without any separation for boys and girls. No flies and mosquitoes were observed. However, poor solid waste management was observed in the market area. Although an incinerator is available at the hospital, improper treatment of medical waste in the incinerator was observed.

16. The personal hygiene of children is, in general, poor. The overall cleanness of water jerrycans observed at water points is moderate, and most of the water containers are in good condition. There are no regular hygiene promotion activities.

Recommendations

- Conduct an additional latrine assessment
- Expand and scale up sanitation coverage
- Establish a solid waste management system in the town, with a focus on the market area. Support from the Environmental Health Directorate of the state Ministry of Health is required in this regard
- Strengthen intersectoral hygiene promotion and communication for development activities in Golo
- Establish adequate and gender-sensitive school latrines in the schools in Golo

Other long-term recommendations

- The local government should recruit and deploy long-term water, sanitation and hygiene technical staff

- Protection of solar-powered water pumps, especially in areas away from the town centre
- Given the complex nature of groundwater aquifers in Golo, geophysical surveys should be prioritized prior to drilling
- In the long term, surface dams could be explored as an option for artificial recharge inside Golo

3. Health

17. The rehabilitation of the hospital by the Ministry of Health was ongoing when the mission visited. To date, two wards, a laboratory, a pharmacy and a delivery room have been rehabilitated. In addition, a telecommunications company provided an anaesthesia machine, electricity generator and some surgery equipment. The equipment is yet to be installed.

18. There are 2 medical officers at the hospital (1 was on leave), 2 medical assistants, 4 trained nurses, 35 midwives (15 employed by Ministry of Health and 20 volunteers), 7 nutrition assistants (5 employed by the Ministry and 2 volunteers), 1 vaccinator and 10 support staff. Patients have to wait for two to three hours to receive treatment owing to a shortage of staff.

19. Golo hospital is the only functioning health facility in central Jebel Marra. There are other health facilities in the nearby villages, but they are not functional, given the deteriorating security situation. According to the federal Ministry of Health, there is an expansion plan for the health facilities around Golo, namely, in the central Jebel Marra administrative units of Baryary, Bory and Killung, to rehabilitate three health centres. However, that work has yet to begin.

20. The hospital provides consultations, medication, paediatric treatment, nutrition responses, minor surgeries and vaccinations through campaigns. According to the hospital records, the average daily number of outpatients is 100 on ordinary days. However, on market days, the average increases to between 150 and 200 patients.

21. According to the medical doctor at Golo hospital, the main causes of morbidity in central Jebel Marra are seasonal diseases such as malaria, respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, bilharzia and malnutrition. The mortality rates are, however, low, according to the hospital records. Vaginal bleeding and obstructed labour are the major causes of referral.

Gaps in Golo hospital

- Poor structure of the nutrition section, paediatric ward and general theatre. The sewerage system and water supply network need major repairs.
- There are some beds in the wards but not enough for all the patients.
- The laboratory was rehabilitated recently, but there is no equipment for it to perform proper tests and diagnoses.
- There is one room at the rehabilitated portion identified as the pharmacy. However, owing to the unavailability of a pharmacist, it is not functional.

- There is no cold chain system available to maintain a proper temperature for specific medicines.
- An incinerator for medical waste is available but requires rehabilitation. It is also poorly used: the assessment team observed some medical waste disposed of outside it.
- There is no supplementary feeding programme for cases of moderate acute malnutrition.
- There is no stabilization centre.
- There is only one outpatient therapeutic centre to manage acute malnutrition in central Jebel Marra. There is a shortage in ready-to-use therapeutic food for the treatment of malnourished children.
- The medical officer reported that a shortage of medicine was a major problem. The last supply of medicine had been received nearly three months ago. Medicine for malaria is available only for children less than 5 years of age. After a doctor's prescription, adults have to purchase medicine from the market.
- In case of an outbreak, such as cholera, there are no kits available for treatment.

Recommendations

- Complete the rehabilitation and the equipping of Golo hospital, in particular the theatre, laboratory and pharmacy
- Recruit staff to be deployed at the hospital. Some of the critical staff to be recruited include laboratory technicians and a pharmacist. Training of staff is also recommended
- Rehabilitate health centres in the main villages surrounding Golo to reduce the burden on the hospital and to bring medical services closer to the people
- Establish a stabilization centre in Golo hospital. According to the nutrition records in the hospital, there is an urgent need for a stabilization centre
- Scale up the outpatient therapeutic centre programme in central Jebel Marra through the establishment of new centres in the main villages. The findings of the nutrition survey conducted should be shared by the nutrition staff
- Ensure a regular supply of drugs to the hospital to avoid items running out, given that this is the only hospital available in central Jebel Marra
- Establish cold chain in the hospital
- Establish a solid waste management system in the hospital. In addition, the available water supply network in the hospital should be improved
- Undertake public health promotion through community awareness and building the capacity of local committees
- Provide orientation to the medical staff on the proper use of the incinerator

4. Emergency shelter and non-food items

22. According to estimates from the Humanitarian Aid Commission, nearly 60,000 people have returned to their original homes in Golo over the past few months. The Commission mentioned that some 10,000 internally displaced persons remained in Golo, living with friends and relatives, and were waiting to return to their villages in the coming days.

23. In June 2016, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in partnership with the Sudan Red Crescent Society, distributed non-food items to 3,000 families, or an estimated 15,000 people, in Golo. Each family received a kit comprising a blanket, jerrycan, sleeping mat and plastic sheet.

Recommendations

- Register internally displaced persons and returnees in Golo and surrounding villages to provide accurate figures to inform a response
- Assess and register vulnerable groups that need to be supported with non-food item kits
- Undertake targeted distribution of non-food items to newly displaced persons reportedly still arriving in Golo from the southern villages

5. Education

24. There is one mixed secondary school with a total of 400 students. The school, however, needs an additional three classrooms.

25. The assessment team also visited the two basic schools in Golo and noted the following gaps:

(a) The average class size in the two schools is 80 students. This does not provide a good learning environment for students;

(b) The latrines in both schools are not separated for boys and girls;

(c) In Sadaga school, there are no sitting facilities for students. The government of Central Darfur State, however, provided chairs to Um school;

(d) There is no school feeding programme in both schools;

(e) Lack of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, including water points and hygiene promotion, in both schools;

(f) There are 14 government teachers available in Sadaga school.

Recommendations

- If necessary, conduct an in-depth education needs assessment not only in schools in Golo, but also in schools outside it
- Conduct hygiene promotion activities in schools to guide children in good hygiene practices
- Establish a school feeding programme in schools in central Jebel Marra

- Provide sitting facilities in schools
- Provide educational materials to boost learning
- Rehabilitate school classrooms and construct new classrooms in schools that have needs

Return, reintegration and recovery

26. The Humanitarian Aid Commission mentioned that nearly all the 148,000 people displaced from central Jebel Marra had returned. They had been displaced to Guldo, Kabkabiyah, Nyala, Thur and Zalingei. According to the Commission, nearly all the people in Golo were displaced during the recent conflict. At the time of the mission, however, the Commission estimated that nearly all the estimated 60,000 residents had returned. It mentioned that some 10,000 internally displaced persons remained in Golo and were waiting to return to their villages in Balfal, Burei, Dorsa, Kela, Kerow, Killung, Koron, Longa, Sarrong, Sega, Serimam, Ternga and, Zebona in the coming days. Interviews with some community members in Golo indicated that more than 45 per cent of the current population in Golo is not originally from there. This means that there could be more internally displaced persons in Golo than the estimated 10,000. There are also unverified reports that newly displaced persons continue to arrive from the southern villages of Golo owing to insecurity.

27. The remaining estimated 68,000 people are believed to have returned to their villages in other parts of central Jebel Marra, according to the local authorities. They mentioned that the two villages of Koron and Sirisam had witnessed limited returns owing to security concerns.

28. A major challenge is that there has been no registration of internally displaced persons and/or returnees in Golo and in the villages of the central Jebel Marra. Without registration, the population figures mentioned above remain as estimates because they have not been verified. The mission, however, notes that the number of people in Golo is higher compared with that recorded by the scoping mission in August 2016. Nevertheless, it was not possible to distinguish how many returnees and internally displaced persons constitute the current population in Golo. Its market is functioning and the number of shops has increased considerably.

29. In addition to sectoral gaps that are highlighted by other sectors, the return, reintegration and recovery sector notes the following gaps that should be addressed to support recovery efforts:

(a) Lack of clarity on the number of internally displaced persons and returnees in Golo and the surrounding villages. This affects planning for recovery and durable solutions to the issue of internally displaced persons;

(b) Human resource gaps in some of the critical government departments, including agriculture, education and health;

(c) Limited partnership opportunities owing to the absence of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Only the Sudan Red Crescent Society is present in the area;

(d) Poor infrastructure, such as roads, communications facilities and accommodation limit the movement of personnel to Golo. The poor state of the road also limits the movement of supplies and agricultural produce from Golo to markets outside central Jebel Marra. This affects trade and marketing.

Recommendations

- Register and verify internally displaced persons and returnees in Golo
- Once the numbers are determined, develop a comprehensive response plan for both internally displaced persons and returnees
- Rehabilitate the Nertiti-Golo road to improve access to central Jebel Marra
- Reactivate the regular flights of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service to and from Golo to encourage regular and easy travel to central Jebel Marra
- Undertake emergency food distribution to newly displaced persons who are fleeing to Golo
- Rehabilitate the former Danish Refugee Council guesthouse to accommodate visitors to Golo
- Conduct a follow-up in-depth assessment in central Jebel Marra covering villages outside Golo to comprehensively determine community needs

Attachment

List of assessment mission participants

Name	*Government department/organization*
Badr El Din Abdallah Mohamed Khair	Humanitarian Aid Commission (team leader)
Felix Omunu	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (co-leader)
Sidiq Mohamed Kambal	Military Intelligence
Emad Ahmed Abdel Raheem	National Intelligence and Security Service
Abdallah Ali Alhassan Abu Geisaisa	Ministry of Education
Babiker Hassan Adam	Ministry of Agriculture
Ammar Ahmed Babiker	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Khalid Elamin Elgamry	Ministry of Health
Osama Mohamed Ismail	Ministry of Health
Adam Allikaib	Sudan Red Crescent Society
Magdi Yousif	Humanitarian Aid Commission, Zalingei office
Trevor Clark	United Nations Children's Fund
Mohammed Zakaria	United Nations Children's Fund
Mohaned Osman	United Nations Children's Fund
Walaa Hussein Awad	United Nations Children's Fund
Nesseraldin Mohamed	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Abubaker Omer Ahmed	World Food Programme
Abdalla Eltelaib	United Nations Development Programme
Eroni Ravore	Department of Safety and Security (United Nations)
Mohamed Ahmed Waqass	Islamic Relief Worldwide